AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A semiconductor laser device comprising:

a first nitride based semiconductor layer including a light emitting layer and containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium;

a ridge portion formed in a region having a predetermined width on said first nitride based semiconductor layer, having an upper surface having a first width and a side surface, and containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium;

a current blocking layer formed on said first nitride based semiconductor layer and on a region from the side surface of said ridge portion to the upper surface thereof by a transverse growth technique, and having an opening having a second width smaller than said first width on the upper surface of said ridge portion; and

a second nitride based semiconductor layer formed on said ridge portion inside said opening and containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium.

Claim 2 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said current blocking layer is composed of a nitride based semiconductor containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium.

Claim 3 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said first nitride based semiconductor layer comprises an n-type cladding layer, said light emitting layer, and a first p-type cladding layer, and said ridge portion comprises a second p-type cladding layer.

Claim 4 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein said current blocking layer contains aluminum and gallium.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein said current blocking layer contains indium and gallium.

Claim 7 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said second nitride based semiconductor layer is formed so as to cover a region above said opening and a region on said current blocking layer.

Claim 8 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 7, further comprising

an type electrode formed on said second nitride based semiconductor layer.

Claim 9 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said current blocking layer has a single-layer structure.

Claim 10 (original): The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said current blocking layer has a multi-layer structure.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of fabricating a semiconductor laser device, comprising the steps of:

forming a first nitride based semiconductor layer including a light emitting layer and containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium;

forming a ridge portion having an upper surface having a first width and a side surface, and containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium in a region having a predetermined width on said first nitride based semiconductor layer;

forming on a region from the side surface of said ridge portion to the upper surface thereof a current blocking layer by a transverse growth technique having an opening having a second width smaller than said first width on the upper surface of said ridge portion; and

forming a second nitride based semiconductor layer containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium on said ridge portion inside said opening.

Claim 12 (original): The method according to claim 11, wherein

said current blocking layer is composed of a nitride based semiconductor containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium, and

the step of forming said current blocking layer comprises the steps of

forming a striped insulating film on the upper surface of said ridge portion, and

forming said current blocking layer extending to a region, excluding the region having said second width, on the upper surface of said ridge portion from a region on said first nitride based semiconductor layer on both sides of said ridge portion by using a transverse growth technique.

Claim 13 (original): The method according to claim 11,

the step of forming said first nitride based semiconductor layer comprises the step of forming an n-type cladding layer, said light emitting layer, and a p-type cladding layer in this order, and

the step of forming said ridge portion comprises the step of etching said p-type cladding layer, except in a region having said first width of said p-type cladding layer.

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (original): The method according to claim 11, wherein

the step of forming said second nitride based semiconductor layer comprises the step of forming said second nitride based semiconductor layer for covering a region above said opening and a region on said current blocking layer.

Claim 16 (original): The method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of forming an type electrode on said second nitride based semiconductor layer.

Claim 17 (original): The method according to claim 11, wherein

the step of forming said current blocking layer comprises the step of forming a single nitride based semiconductor layer containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium.

Claim 18 (original): The method according to claim 11, wherein

the step of forming said current blocking layer comprises the step of stacking a plurality of nitride based semiconductor layers containing at least one of indium, gallium, aluminum, boron and thallium.